

The Principles of Jarh Wa Tadeel in the Science of Hadith

A nation placed at a higher level of thought and built upon an ideology always protects and nourishes the ideology which it has adopted, due to which it treads on the path of success, because the said ideology is the key to its strength. An important aspect of protection of the ideology is to prevent flawed ideas and thoughts from making their way into the ideology. This necessitates that the principles that are related to the understanding of that ideology are also protected, as is the ideology. Muslims of the foremost generation were aware of Islam as a Deen and as the source of their strength. Thus, they put great emphasis on protecting the foundational sources of the ideology. The work of giving Quran the form of a Mus'haf (book) and then uniting Muslims on the dialect of the Quraish was completed in the time of the beloved Companions of the Prophet (saw). When a considerable number of Huffaaz (memorizers of the Quran) got martyred in the Battle of Yamamah, Quran was collected in the form of a Mushaf in the era of the caliphate of Abu Bakr (ra). And when in the era of Caliph Uthman (ra) there was a fear of disagreement on the Quran due to the differences in dialects, six copies of Quran were prepared from the Mus'haf that was collected by Zaid ibn Thabit (ra) and kept by Umm al Momineen Hafsa binte Umar (ra), and were disseminated among all Muslim lands. Moreover, the Mus'hafs available with the people at that time written in different dialects were all collected and burnt in order to prevent further disagreement over the Quran due to differences in dialects. After Quran, the second source of the Islamic ideology is the Sunnah of the Prophet (saw). When the need to protect the Sunnah of the Prophet (saw) arose when the enemies of Islam attempted to attack it and attributed traditions to the Prophet (saw) by fabricating them themselves, this work of protecting the Sunnah was also carried out by the sons of the Ummah in an efficient way.

Regarding the collection of the Quran, it is clearly mentioned everywhere that the said work was administered by the caliphate itself and the rulers of Muslims i.e. the Rightly Guided Caliphs, understood the importance of the said responsibility quite well. However the effort of Muslim rulers in the protection of Ahadith does not get as much attention as it deserves. The work of collection of authentic Ahadith was carried out by the Ummah and the state together. This means that the state was not unaware of the danger of this conspiracy by the enemies of Islam. Thus, those liars who had fabricated and spread such fabricated Ahadith in the Ummah were punished by the State. Jalal ud Deen Suyuti mentions in Tadreeb ur Raawi that Abdul Kareem bin Abi Auja who used to fabricate Ahadith was executed in the era of Caliph Mahdi as a punishment for fabricating Ahadith. He admitted that he had fabricated four thousand Ahadith in which he changed the Halaal to Haram and the Haram to Halal. Similarly, a liar was brought in the court of caliph Haroon ur Rasheed who was also executed. He asked Caliph Haroon ur Rasheed that why would he punish him with death sentence. Haroon ur Rasheed answered: "So that the people of Allah (swt) might be spared from your evil". Upon this the liar said: "But how would you get spared from those one thousand Ahadith which I have fabricated and attributed to the Prophet (saw)", the caliph said: "O enemy of Allah (swt)! How come you are not aware of Abu Ishaq Al-Fazaari and Abdullah bin Mubarak who will filter out each and every word from you fabricated Ahadith" (Tareekh ul Khulafah). This shows that the state was directly involved in the process of the collection of Ahadith as well. Caliph Umar bin Abdul Aziz (d. 101 AH), who is from the generation of Tabi'een, wrote to Qadhi Abu Bakr ibn Hazm, the governor (wali) of Madina, to search for Ahadith of the Prophet (saw) and to note them down as he feared that the knowledge might vanish and the Ulema might become extinct. So he instructed to accept only the Ahadith of the Prophet (saw) (Bukhari). He wrote similar letters to other of his governors as well (Fath ul Baari).

Hizb ut Tahrir in its published leaflet "Entering the Society" explains that the state is an executive entity, while the group or the party structure that exists in the society is an intellectual entity. Thus, Tabi'een and Taba Tabi'een were part of an intellectual entity who

embarked upon protecting the ideological foundations of Islam and the Caliphate played its role in dealing with this fitna as an executive entity by punishing the fabricators of Ahadith.

As far as the origin of the conspiracy of fabricating Ahadith is concerned, the anti-Islam elements got this opportunity when the Islamic State was faced with a political turmoil and this happened after the martyrdom of caliph Uthman (ra). Before this, there was usually not much need of scrutinizing the source of Ahadith as all the Sahabah were just and trustworthy. That is why people did not use to ask for isnaad (chains of transmission) in the time of the Prophet (saw) and of his companions (ra). After the demise of Uthman (ra), the Sahabah themselves enjoined people to check from whom they are receiving the Ahadith. Abu Sakeenah Majashi says that he heard Ali (ra) standing in the masjid in Kufa saying: "Scrutinize the person from whom you receive this knowledge (i.e. Ahadith) because this is the Deen". Imam Ibn Sireen says: "People did not use to ask about the narration (sanad). However, after the fitna, they used to say: 'Tell us the names of your narrators'. So when the narrators were found to be from those who were upon the Sunnah, their narrations were accepted, and if they were found to be those from Ahl ul Bidah, their narrated Ahadith were not accepted" (Muqaddimah Lissaan ul Mizaan). The fitna mentioned here was the event of the martyrdom of caliph Uthman (ra) after which Muslims fought battles amongst them. Similarly Saeed ibn Musayyib (d. 93 AH) says: "After the first fitna i.e. the assassination of Uthman (ra) occurred, no companion of Badr was left as a consequence of the events that followed". After the martyrdom of Uthman (ra) different groups came into being such as the Khawarij. Their followers adopted different opinions and when they did not find a sharia evidence in favor of their opinions they fabricated Ahadith and attributed them to the Prophet (saw).

However the fabrication of Ahadith had other reasons as well. Some illiterate Sufis fabricated Ahadith to make people inclined towards good deeds. Some people attributed the sayings of intellectuals and scholars to the Prophet (saw) and some people fabricated Ahadith to please the rulers.

The process of scrutinizing the Ahadith and their narrators is called "Jarh wa Tadeel" and the knowledge of the biographies of the narrators is called "Ilm ur Rijal". Jarh in Arabic means to make someone wounded. The Urdu word "Jaariyat" also stems from the word "Jarh". However in hadith terminology "Jarh" means to specify something about the narrator that his/her narration becomes unacceptable and acting upon such a narration is considered as "Baatil" or invalid. On the other hand, "Tadeel" comes from the word "Adl" which linguistically means declaring someone just or upright. In hadith terminology, it means to specify something about the narrator that his/her narration becomes acceptable and trustworthy (Hafiz Ibn al Athir, Jami al Usool).

The whole discussion of Jarh and Tadeel relates to the time of the Tabaeen up to the time of the muhadditheen who compiled the Ahadith. It is not related to the time before that nor to the time after that. Not before Tabaeen because that was the time of the Sahabah (ra) and there is no such discussion about the Sahabah as they were all trustworthy (Thiqah). Not because they were infallible from sins but because their trustworthiness is established beyond any doubt and their attributing of a lie to the Prophet (saw) is beyond imagination. The discussion of Jarh and Tadeel does not relate to the time after the muhadditheen because they received and compiled the Ahadith after which the tradition of the oral transmission of hadith ended. Whatever work that has been carried out in the field of hadith after that time pertains to the biographies of the narrators, categorizing Ahadith into different types, principles of determining trustworthiness of narrators, and giving judgement on the reliability of Ahadith, rather than collecting the Ahadith from the narrators.

The era of the Sahabah is from the demise of the Prophet (saw) in 11 AH up to 100 AH. The oldest of the Sahabah include Sahl ibn Saad (ra), Anas ibn Malik (ra) and Aamir bin Waathilah (ra). Anas ibn Malik (ra) died at the age of 103 years in Basra around 92 AH. Someone asked him whether or not any Companion of the Prophet (saw) as living by that time. Anas (ra) responded that there was no living companion at that time as such, however

there were some Bedouins left who had seen the Prophet (saw). Amir bin Waasilah (ra) died in 110 AH at Makkah. He used to say that there was no person left except him who had seen the Prophet (saw). After the Sahabah, was the time of the Tabaeen. They were those who had met the Sahabah and narrated traditions from them. Those who deliberately lied from amongst them were negligible. However, they did make mistakes in narrating the Ahadith and in their understanding. The time of the Tabaeen continues till the end of the second century after Hijra. Hafiz Sakhaawi, who was the student of Ibn Hajr al-Asqalaani states in his book Fath ul Mughees that Khalf ibn Khaleefah was the last Tabaeen after whom the world became void of the Tabaeen. He died in 181 AH. After this was the era of the Taba Tabaeen. The period between 150 AH and 180 AH was that of the extinction of the Tabaeen, which was also the period of the start of the Taba Tabaeen which lasted till the start of third century after Hijrah. And then in that century those books on Ahadith were compiled that are the famous primary sources of Ahadith i.e. Bukhari, Muslim, Ibn Majah, Tirmidhi, Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Musnad Abu Dawud, Darimi etc. despite the fact that Ahadith were compiled in the form of books even before this by Tabaeen and Taba Tabaeen as well. The last muhaddith who received Ahadith directly from their narrators and compiled them in books was Imam Bayhaqi who passed away in 458 AH.

A glimpse of the times in which certain Muhadditheen, compilers of the books of Ahadith and Imams of the Mujtahideen existed is presented below:

Second Century After Hijrah:

Hasan al Basri	110 AH
Ibn Sireen	110 AH
Ibn Shihab az Zuhri	124 AH
Musa bin Uqbah	145 AH
Imam Abu Hanifah	150 AH
Imam Malik ibn Anas	179 AH
Imam Abdullah bin Mubarak	181 AH

Third Century After Hijrah:

Imam Muhammad bin Idrees Shafii	204 AH
Ibn Hisham	218 AH
Ibn Saad	230 AH
Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal	241 AH
Imam Abdur Rahman bin Abdullah Darimi	255 AH
Imam Muhammad bin Ismail Bukhari	256 AH
Imam Muslim	261 AH
Imam Ibn Majah	273 AH
Imam Abu Dawud	275 AH
Imam Tirmidhi	279 AH

After all these introductory remarks, we will now come to the topic about the opinion of the Hizb regarding the principles of Jarh and Tadeel i.e. scrutinizing of the narrators of Ahadith. This is clear that the Hizb accepts Sahih Ahadith to be used as evidence and not the Daef (weak) Ahadith. However, the problem occurs when the Shabaab quote a hadith while the people from different school of thought say that what is said is wrong because the quoted hadith is Daef, as graded as such by so and so muhaddith. As an example, there is a discussion about Waaqidi from whom his student Muhammad Ibn Saad has narrated and thus a significant portion of Seerah is narrated from Waaqidi, or those Ahadith that do not mandate Zakah on the jewelry that is worn in contrast to the jewelry that is sold, or the hadith in which the Prophet (saw) said that his Companions (ra) are like stars, so whoever follows

any one of them, will be guided, or the hadith about the public property which the shabaab quote quite frequently. However, some people consider them Daef.

On the other hand, we see some people in Pakistan who accept all kinds of Ahadith that are narrated in hadith collections without going into the discussion of Sahih and Daef, and use them as evidence, so that the practices and trends which they have already adopted as part of the Deen, may be justified. So the question is why not accept all the Ahadith narrated in Kutb-e-Sittah (i.e. The Six Books) as authentic especially when we say that the Muhaditheen accepted the Ahadith after proper scrutiny. So shall we prefer someone else's research about those Ahadith over the research of the said Imams of Ahadith? There is also a group which has tried to make the criteria of accepting the Ahadith extra strict, targeting the Ijtihadaat of the Mujtahideen and their compiled fiqh so as to discredit them and the Ahadith narrated in the books of fiqh may be rejected and all opinions of Mujtahideen may be rejected other than their own specific opinions. The result of their methodology is that they limited Islam only to the matters of Aqaid, Ibadaat and a few Muamlaat and did away with the discussion of the systems and state policies of Islam. Historically, their methodology smells of insincerity.

The correct methodology in this regard is that we should neither be over-strict in rejecting the Ahadith, nor should we be negligent or careless regarding the scrutiny of the Ahadith.

As far as those Ahadith are concerned whose weakness (Duaf) is disputed such that some people do not use them as evidence by considering them Daef while some people consider them acceptable for evidence. This happens normally for two reasons:

1. Some muhaditheen consider some narrators as Majhool (Unknown) while other muhaditheen consider those narrators as Maroof (Known).

2. Some muhaditheen consider some narrators trustworthy while other muhaditheen consider the same narrators as otherwise.

If some muhaditheen considered a narrator as Majhool while some other muhaditheen considered him Maroof by recognizing him and stated him trustworthy (Thiqah), in such a situation, that narrator ceases to be Majhool. Thus even if all other muhaditheen are not aware of a narrator which a muhaditheen is aware of him and is satisfied with his trustworthiness, this is enough for the acceptability of that narrator, unless there is no other reason for rejection of that hadith. Same is the case with those Ahadith in which it is not established that a narrator has heard (Samaa) from the narrator above him, while according to some other muhaditheen, the same is established.

This was regarding the narrator who was Majhool and not known. As far as such a matter is concerned in which some muhaditheen consider some narrators as trustworthy while other muhaditheen consider the same narrators as otherwise, so at this place there is a difference on the Jarh and Tadeel (or scrutiny) of the same narrators. That is, some muhaditheen did Jarh on a narrator and graded him untrustworthy (Ghair Thiqah) while some are grading him acceptable by doing his Tadeel. In such a case, the principle is that Jarh Mufassir (i.e. Jarh with detail) is preferred over Tadeel and Tadeel is preferred over Jarh Ghair Mufassir (i.e. Jarh without detail). This means that when a muhaditheen has done Jarh of a narrator and graded him untrustworthy and also stated its reason for example that a certain narrator used to lie deliberately or was sinful (Faasiq) or was from Ahl al Biddah or had a weak memory or made frequent mistakes or his narrated Ahadith go against the Ahadith of those narrators who are famous for their trustworthiness, so such kind of Jarh is called Jarh Mufassir and on the basis of this, the opinion of those will be rejected who graded that narrator as Aadil (Just) or Daabit (having good retentive memory). However, if a muhaditheen has done Jarh of a narrator and graded him untrustworthy but has not mentioned the details, then such a kind is called Jarh Ghair Mufassir. This Jarh is not accepted and Tadeel is preferred over it. Thus the saying of the Imams of Hadith that a particular hadith is not proven, or that it is Munkar or a narrator is Majrooh (one whose Jarh has been done) or he is not Aadil, without mentioning the reason of Jarh, such a Jarh is not acceptable. The reason of this principle is that some muhaditheen have declared a few narrators Majrooh due to a

reason which in reality does not render them untrustworthy (ghair thiqah). For example, Khateeb Baghdadi says that Imam Shafii got to know of a person who had declared a narrator Majrooh. So Imam Shafii asked about the reason of Jarh. The person who did Jarh said that he had seen that person urinating while standing. Imam Shafii said that there was nothing in it due to which he might be declared Majrooh. That person said that the reason was that when he urinated while standing, his urine drops splashed on his body and clothes, and then he prayed in the same condition. Imam Shafii asked if he had seen him praying in the same condition. Upon this, that person said no. Thus according to Imam Shafii, such kind of Jarh was not valid. Similarly, Imam Shuba was asked why he had rejected a hadith of a narrator. He answered that he had seen that person riding a Turkish horse with a spur in his shoes, thus he rejected his narration. Hakam bin Utaybah was asked that why he had not narrated from Zazaan. He said that he used to speak too much. Jareed bin Abdul Hameed rejected the narration of Samaak ibn Harb when he saw him urinating while standing. So these and similar reasons are not sufficient to declare a narrator as untrustworthy.

The person who is doing Jarh and Tadeel must also be a bearer of knowledge and piety, and be proficient in the reasons of Jarh and Tadeel. The famous muhaddith Hafiz Dhahabi advises the Jaarih (one who does Jarh) and Maadal (one who does Tadeel): "If you are satisfied with your own understanding, honesty, religiousness and righteousness, only then do Jarh. Otherwise don't do it. If you are dominated by your own self or prejudice or unrequired bias and support for a particular school of thought, then for the sake of God, do not bear this burden. And if you know about yourself that you mix things up and you are obsessed and transgress the limits of Allah (swt), then please spare yourself with us." (Tadhkiratul Huffaaz).

As far as those Ahadith are concerned which the mujtahideen have mentioned in their books as evidences for different issues, they are also acceptable. Because this shows that it would definitely have been correct according to that mujtahid to deduce a ruling from that hadith, and we cannot imagine that a mujtahid uses a hadith as evidence while it falls short of being used as an evidence and is not proven as a saying of the Prophet (saw). Altogether rejecting the Ahadith quoted by Imams of Mujtahideen in their books of fiqh is against the very purpose of compilation of Ahadith itself. Muhadditheen did not collect Ahadith because they liked such academic kind of work and they only wanted to collect the sayings of the Prophet (saw) and of his Companions (ra). Rather, it was because of the fact that the Uswa (way) of the Prophet (saw) is the evidence of Halal and Haram in Islam. Thus, it would be very strange to assume that only muhadditheen were concerned about the authenticity and trustworthiness of Ahadith, while mujtahideen who actually had to extract Ahkaam pertaining to Halal and Haram on the basis of Ahadith, were not concerned which Ahadith they were accepting and from whom they were accepting. Thus, deducing from a hadith by a mujtahid, especially by the Imams of Ijtihad and using it as evidence by most mujtahideen, makes it acceptable to be used as an evidence. Such Ahadith are graded as "Hasan" (i.e. fair). However, this does not mean that all the Ahadith mentioned in the books of Fiqh and Usool al Fiqh are acceptable. In fact, the nature of the weakness of such a hadith is required to be seen. If all the muhadditheen grade that hadith as Daef then such a hadith will not be accepted just because mujtahideen have used it for deduction. And normally, the situation is that a hadith whose weakness is famous and agreed upon among the muhadditheen is also not relied upon by the mujtahideen as well. However, a hadith on whose weakness muhadditheen differ among themselves, the reliance of mujtahideen upon that hadith and the other indications of its strength remove the weakness from that hadith.

The conclusion is that if it is said about a hadith that it is Daef according to some scholars, it is not sufficient to put that hadith on one side and not to rely upon it. In fact, it is required that its weakness may be debated that whether mujtahideen and fuqahah, those who are trustworthy, have used it as evidence or not. Or that it has such Shawahid and Mutabiat which may remove its weakness. Or whether all the scholars of hadith have graded it Daef? Or they have differed on the reasons of its weakness? Only after scrutinizing all these things, one can decide whether that hadith can be used as an evidence for

deduction or not.

I will end with this point that there are abundant books available on Islamic sciences with the subjects like the science of hadith, the science of tafseer, the science of seerah, Arabic language, fiqh, usool al fiqh and history, which not only guide us regarding Islamic rulings and increase our understanding of the Islamic systems, but they also inform upon the intellectual revolution which the implementation of Islamic ideology brought. Muslims originated many sciences of knowledge and gave birth to experts in all fields of knowledge. These experts were not in hundreds, or one or two thousand. They were in thousands. The academic heritage of Islam is more than any nation. And the service to knowledge by this Ummah is more than any other nation. And no other nation has explained its ideology as extensively as the Muslims had done. And no ideology has mobilized its believers for fulfilling its requirements more than the Islamic ideology did. The detailed study of the Islamic sciences, on one hand, makes us understand Islam even better, on the other hand it also builds our confidence that when this ideology will be implemented again, what kind of intellectual confidence it will have! Thus, it is beneficial for us to study the efforts that have been made within the said Islamic sciences. Only then would we be able to properly visualize the environment that existed within the Muslim Ummah century after century. Unfortunately, today the secular group has restricted the mention of Islam to only a few events about Khulafah and a few obscene examples and by doing this, they have diverted the eyes of the sons of this Ummah from those fountains of knowledge from which they should have fulfilled themselves. Thus, the sons of this Ummah refer to the sickening history and philosophies of Europe in order to quench their thirst for knowledge and intellect; thus, by making them their source and criteria, so they not only become sick themselves but also make others sick. However, Alhamdulillah, a party like Hizb ut Tahrir is present in this Ummah which has prepared such a culture for its followers that guides them about what topics to make the focus of their study out of the vast ocean of sciences and thoughts. Otherwise, the nature of these sciences is such that if we had embarked upon reaching the zenith of these sciences by ourselves, our lives would have been spent in making distinction between the right and the wrong and the strong and the weak in only one or a few of those sciences. May Allah (swt) bless the Muslim Ummah with the Khilafah which may wash off all such dirt that has distracted the Muslims intellectually and has blurred the correct comprehension of Islam in their minds. I will end this discussion with the following hadith:

It was narrated that Kathir bin Qais said: "I was sitting with Abu Darda' in the mosque of Damascus when a man came to him and said: 'O Abu Darda', I have come to you from Al-Madinah, the city of the Messenger of Allah, for a Hadith which I have heard that you narrate from the Prophet (saw).' He said: 'Did you not come for trade?' He said: 'No.' He said: 'Did you not come for anything else?' He said: 'No.' He said: 'I heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) say: **«مَنْ سَلَكَ طَرِيقًا يَلْتَمِسُ فِيهِ عِلْمًا سَهَّلَ اللَّهُ لَهُ طَرِيقًا إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ وَإِنَّ الْمَلَائِكَةَ لَتَضَعُ أجنحتها رِضًا لِطَالِبِ الْعِلْمِ وَإِنَّ طَالِبَ الْعِلْمِ يَسْتَغْفِرُ لَهُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ حَتَّى الْجِبَّتَانِ فِي الْمَاءِ وَإِنَّ فَضْلَ الْعَالِمِ عَلَى الْعَابِدِ كَفَضْلِ الْقَمَرِ عَلَى سَائِرِ الْكَوَاكِبِ»** **“Whoever follows a path in the pursuit of knowledge, Allah will make easy for him a path to Paradise. The angels lower their wings in approval of the seeker of knowledge, and everyone in the heavens and on earth prays for forgiveness for the seeker of knowledge, even the fish in the sea. The superiority of the scholar over the worshipper is like the superiority of the moon above all other heavenly bodies. The scholars are the heirs of the Prophets, for the Prophets did not leave behind Dinar or Dirham, rather they left behind knowledge, so whoever takes it has taken a great share.”** (Ibn Majah 223, Abu Dawud 3641, Tirmidhi 2682)

May Allah (swt) grant us the same longing and desire and accept it on behalf of both the learner and the teacher. Indeed, Allah is the Giver of more than we can imagine. Ameen.

Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by

Usman Adil – Pakistan